



TOWN OF ACTON  
RECREATION COMMISSION

RECEIVED  
SEP 17 2011

MINUTES - SEPTEMBER 6, 2011

7:00 PM

ACTON TOWN HALL  
ROOM 126

ATTENDEES

Recreation Commission members present were Ms. Karen Jarsky, Chair, Ms. Betsy Mercier, Commissioner, Ms. Bridget McKeever-Matz, Vice-Chair, Mr. Stephen Leo, Commissioner (7:25pm), Mr. John Sonner, Selectman, Ms. Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Director; Ms. Cheryl Getsick, Secretary; Ms. Paulina Knibbe, Citizen, Mr. David Wilson, Esq., Citizen, Mr. Joe Will, Citizen, Mr. Michael Kebabian, Citizen.

AGENDA TOPICS

Meeting called to order at: 7:00 PM

- **Citizens Concerns:** Mr. Michael Kebabjian, Sr. provided a two-page "Catch and Release Only" proposal dated 9/6/11 to the Board for review (see attached). Suggestions were made by Mr. Kebabjian of creating a "protected and residence only" fishing area at NARA within the "Catch and Release Only" proposal. State Basic License Information is attached to the proposal. Selectman Sonner raised the concern of logistics and enforcement of such a proposal. Mr. Kebabjian noted the lack of enforcement of fishing licenses and suggested volunteers could enforce the "Catch and Release" guidelines.

CONSENT AGENDA

DISCUSSION August 2011 minutes reviewed

ACTION ITEM August 2011 minutes were accepted as amended, 3-0

TOPIC: ACTON 2020 RECREATION INPUT & SENIOR CENTER EXPANSION

DISCUSSION

Ms. Paulina Knibbe spoke to the Board and provided a one-page document dated 8/7/11 titled "Goal 4" (see attached) which outlines objectives for developing community gathering and recreation space within the Town of Acton. A draft of the proposal will be available in approximately one week for the Commissioners' review to ensure it reflects the objectives of the Recreation Commission. Ms. Knibbe is also a member of the Senior Center Expansion Committee.

ACTION ITEM Ms. Knibbe requested feedback from the Commissioners as soon as possible.

TOPIC: FRIENDS OF THE LOWER FIELDS PRESENTATION

DISCUSSION

David Wilson, Esq. provided a copy of the presentation "Eight Fields In Two", (see attached). League contributions, a bank loan and school funds in addition to CPA funds will make this project feasible. The fields will be paid for by charging outside organizations. A CPA application will be submitted for lighting, skate bowls and a parking lot. The regional school committee, upon acceptance would be contributing \$214K. The project totals close to \$2.6M. In addition, the cost of adding two skate bowls for the park will cost approximately \$80K. There will be an intergovernmental agreement between the Acton Boxborough Regional Schools and the Town of Acton.

ACTION ITEM The regional school district will be voting on this proposal shortly.

## TOPIC: CPA PROJECTS

### DISCUSSION

Goward playground eligibility: Ms. Fochtman will be pursuing an engineering study which would help with determining the cost of the site preparation. More details are needed. Recreation has received a few quotes. One quote was a playground dedicated to 2-5 year old children. Ms. Mercier commented there is feedback from the parents of the children. Mr. Leo will inquire as to the age group which would benefit from this playground. Ms. Jarsky noted the Commission for Disabilities would have some valuable input on the development for handicap accessibility. The design must meet and reflect ADA regulations.

### ACTION ITEM

Ms. Fochtman will contact Ms. Lisa Franklin regarding suggestions. Ms. Fochtman will also obtain the site survey and data; provide this information to Travis Ames of GameTime for a more refined quote to include the desires of the survey from the parents of the children utilizing the playground.

### REPORTS:

a) Elm Street Update – nothing to report

b) Morrison Farm Update - nothing to report

c) CPC – nothing to report

d) School Street – nothing to report

### DISCUSSION

e) Playground Update

Gardner Playground will be mulched by the Junior High Students on October 7, 2011.

f) Open Space & Recreation Plan – nothing to report

g) NARA Park Pavilion Update – nothing to report

h) Recreation Operations Peak Software – nothing to report

### NEW BUSINESS/DISCUSSION:

#### MEETING ADJOURNED

#### TIME:

8:45 PM

*\*Supporting and referenced documentation relating to these minutes are available on the Docushare site;  
<https://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-1985>*

## **GOAL 4: Provide More Opportunities for Community Gathering and Recreation**

We value the small town feeling and appreciate the sense of community that results from frequent opportunities for interaction. We support providing places for both casual social interaction and organized events that bring members of the community together. We believe in offering opportunities for both single generation and intergeneration experiences and for sharing of cultural celebration. We aim to provide recreational opportunities for all ages.

**Objective 4.1: Provide a community facility large enough to accommodate a variety of uses and a wide range of programming**

**Objective 4.2: Provide enough playgrounds, parks and conservation lands that every person in Acton can either walk or ride a bike safely to reach one near his or her home.**

**Objective 4.3: Increase opportunities for active recreation.**

**Objective 4.4: Create new informal gathering spaces**

**Objective 4.5: Encourage use of existing gathering space**

**Objective 4.6: Support additional cultural activities**

## Open Space and Recreation Plan: 2008 – 2013

### Goals and Objectives

The Recreation Commission made the following recommendations. They were in agreement that the three goals, 1) Preserve the remaining elements of Acton's rural character, 2) Environmental protection, 3) Improve recreational opportunities remain as stated. They recommended that the following objectives (new items are bold) be revised under goal 3:

- a) **Playground facilities are made up-to-date, safe and accessible.**
- b) **Enhance the quality of Acton's athletic fields through improved maintenance techniques.**
- c) Provide additional athletic fields to meet the needs of the town's growing population.
- d) Ensure handicapped accessibility is available for recreational activities (e.g. trails, picnicking, water-based recreation and camping) at both recreational and conservation areas.
- e) Enhance possibilities for hiking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding, boating and fishing on conservation lands. Expand public outreach to better inform the public of our available passive recreation opportunities.
- f) Promote the development of the two regional bike trails planned to run through Acton.
- g) Encourage regional planning with abutting towns in order to create more expansive human (see 3b above) and wildlife (see 2b above) corridors.

## 5 D. MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACES

### 5D1. RESOURCES MANAGED BY THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT

#### A. NARA PARK

NARA Park has been operating for over ten years, opening to the public in the spring of 2000. This 40-acre outdoor recreation area is home to 6.5 acres of irrigated softball/soccer fields, a 3,000-seat amphitheater and storage shed/snackbar, a playground, volleyball courts, handicap accessible paved walking trails, a 500 foot long bathing beach with a swimming area, and a bathhouse with snack bar, changing and bathroom facilities. Three canopy tents with picnic tables are rented as picnic areas. This area is a hot bed of activity during the summer months. Programs include beach operations: lifeguarded beach, Red Cross swimming lessons, boat rentals and snackbar, NARA Summer Camp for ages 4-15, free outdoor summer concert series, Acton Adult Softball League (AASL), recreation and league sponsored athletic events, and the annual July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration. NARA Park hosts many community events each year, such as American Cancer Society's Acton Relay for Life, theater productions, and cultural events such as Sri Lanka Day, Acton Chinese Cultural Day and Celebrate India. NARA Park beach provides the only public swimming area in town and serves over 600 seasonal members, in addition to selling over 4,500 daily passes each season. NARA is also home to many special events each year: Halloween Monsterbash, Winter Carnival, and Beach Party. The Recreation Department offers a variety of classes for all ages at NARA Park through its Spring-Summer and Fall-Winter programs. Many individuals and companies also use NARA's picnic areas and fields for large functions such as weddings and corporate picnics.

#### B. COMMUNITY GARDENS

Two areas of the town offer opportunity for residents and non-residents to rent a small garden plot each season for a minimal fee. North Acton Community Gardens are located off Rt. 27 in North Acton and are described in greater detail in Section 5?, Conservation Lands (reference tbd). Morrison Farm Community Gardens are located on Concord Road. Details of the Morrison Farm property may be found in Section 5D2.A, Municipal Properties) North Acton has 46 total plots, 12 of which are ½ sized plots, including a permanent herb garden which is not rented. There are currently 38 organic garden plots at Morrison Farm.

#### C. ATHLETIC FIELDS AND TOWN PLAYGROUNDS

##### Athletic Fields

The Town of Acton provides approximately 30 acres of town-owned athletic fields, in addition to the facilities provided by the local and regional schools that are frequently used for non-school activities. The location, sizes, and most common uses of these fields are shown below. Most areas are suited for a variety of athletic uses, with some areas capable of supporting multiple simultaneous uses. *Recreation needs for more athletic fields are discussed in detail in Section tbd. The Recreation Department's comprehensive five-year plan is presented in Section tbd.*

Maintenance of the town athletic fields is the responsibility of the Recreation/Natural Resources Department. Field scheduling is the responsibility of the Recreation Department. The Town's Natural Resources crew provides routine trash removal and weekly mowing for the athletic fields. In addition to the athletic leagues' use of fields, many community groups and companies reserve the athletic areas for games and picnics. Athletic fields, and their associated picnic and playground areas, are also intensively used by families and groups of children.

**General status of fields:**

*Jones Field and Great Hill Field are often too wet in the spring to be playable. Gardner was taken offline in 2000 due to lack of parking. Goward, Hart, MacPherson and Little Great Hill fields are all limited in their utility due to their size and geometry. In each case, only certain levels of play are possible. The difficulty of parking near some of the fields makes them less desirable for their targeted age groups as the very young players are required to walk on the side of, or across, busy town streets.*

*Due to budget and manpower constraints, the Town's maintenance of athletic fields is limited in scope. Leagues provide their own lining of fields, and materials such as silt or stone mix and amenities. Youth Baseball and Soccer also frequently re-sods or reseeds worn areas of fields. The leagues that use our illuminated fields at Elm Street and 2A/27 provide their own funding for lights. Donations of time, labor and services from leagues have been the mainstay of field upkeep for Acton's fields. The Recreation Department has made efforts to reinstitute more regularly scheduled field seeding, fertilization and aeration utilizing the services of outside contractors and using funds accumulated from field and picnic reservations. Note that aging playgrounds were removed at Great Hill in 2005 and Elm Street in 2010 and have not been replaced.*

Ref.	Field Name	Acreage	Playground	Field Uses	Location
1.	Jones Field	3.3	Yes	Baseball	Martin St., S. Acton
2.	Concord Road Field	2	No	Soccer	104 Concord Rd.
3.	Hart Field	2	No	Baseball	80 Taylor Rd.
4.	MacPherson	1	No	Baseball	80 Taylor Rd.
5.	Great Hill	2.5	No	2 Soccer	54 School St.
6.	Little Great Hill	.5	No	Soccer	54 School St.
7.	Elm Street Field	2	No	Softball/Football/Tennis /Soccer/Picnic Shelter	21 Elm St.
8.	Veterans Memorial Field	2	Yes	2 Baseball	655 Main, intersection of Rts. 2A & 27
9.	School Street	14	No	6 Soccer	343-347 School St., off Rt. 2 E
10.	Goward Field	1.69	Yes	Basketball	486 Main St., behind Acton Memorial Library

11.	Gardner Field	1.6	Yes	Basketball; Grass Field closed for league use due to lack of parking	Rt. 111, W. Acton
12.	NARA Fields	6.5	No	Softball/3 Soccer	25 Ledge Rock Way, off Quarry Rd.
13.	T.J. O'Grady Skate Park	1.15	No	Skateboarding, Inline Skating	66 Hayward Rd., near ABRHS
14.	Robbins Mill Rec. Area	1	Yes	Soccer, Basketball, Picnic Shelter	61 Canterbury Hill Rd.
	<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>31.25</b>			

### Field Descriptions

#### **1. JONES FIELD**

Jones Field is located on Martin St., near the intersection of Stow Rd. and Martin St. This field consists of a playground and a full size baseball diamond. Routine maintenance has occurred at Jones Field, including playground repairs and field repairs from vehicle damage. In 2010, the Recreation Department replaced a large safety net that was in tatters between the ball field and playground area to prevent balls from hitting children while they are using the play structures. Infield improvements by the ABYB organization have been made.

#### **2. CONCORD RD. FIELD**

Concord Rd. Field (a.k.a. Woodlawn Field) is located on Concord Rd. between Ice House Pond and the Woodlawn Cemetery entrance. It is an irrigated multiuse soccer field. Concord Rd. was originally leased under a ten-year agreement between the Recreation Commission and the Cemetery Commission, and the site will eventually be used for burial purposes. The lease was renewed in 2008 for 5 years, to be reviewed in October 2012. This field has undergone repeated turf maintenance over the past five years in an effort to produce a better quality playing surface. Current challenges have been the need to reseed or resod worn areas and the infiltration of crabgrass. Overseeding in the fall and winter has been recently attempted. Frequent irrigation system repair is required. Winter skating rinks on the field were discontinued in 2008, due to maintenance issues.

#### **3. HART FIELD**

Hart Field is located at the Conant Elementary School. This field consists of a baseball/softball diamond. During the past five years routine maintenance has taken place at Hart Field.

#### **4. MACPHERSON FIELD**

MacPherson Field is located at the Conant Elementary School. This field consists of a baseball diamond. MacPherson received two new shaded dugouts in May 2008 by ABYB, who led the construction effort with Town support and a grant from the Melanoma Foundation. Field vandalism from vehicles was an issue that was resolved by blocking field entry with boulders.

### **5. GREAT HILL FIELD**

Great Hill is located on School St. behind the South Acton Fire station. This field contains two soccer fields adjacent to the Great Hill Conservation Area. A station with dog waste bags is provided by the Recreation Dept. A playground with outdated equipment was removed in 2005 and has not been replaced. Great Hill has been extensively used by ABYS for soccer play. The field and pond area are also frequented by dog owners and their pets. A routine Sunday morning gathering of dogs has been reported to number up to fifty at a time, and tensions between dog owners and sports players have at times been addressed by the Recreation Commission. Field wear has been on the increase and has been addressed with reseeding and resting. Overseeding in the fall and winter has been recently attempted, since access to this field in the spring is often delayed due to its wetness.

### **6. LITTLE GREAT HILL FIELD**

Little Great Hill is located off of School St. behind the South Acton Fire station and to the left of the Great Hill Field. This field contains small sized soccer fields. In the past five years, Little Great Hill has been used in a more limited capacity by Youth Soccer. The path to the field is in need of a boardwalk extension closer to the parking lot due to frequent muddy conditions. The existing boardwalk has occasionally been reported as a site of ground bee nests that attack passersby and need removal.

### **7. ELM STREET FIELD**

The Elm St. playing fields are located next to the Douglas Elementary School in West Acton. The Elm St. fields consist of a picnic shelter, two tennis courts and a lighted softball diamond, outfield multiuse practice area, and adjacent small soccer field. Most notably, Elm Street Field underwent a major lighting replacement project that was completed in August 2007. The new Musco lighting system provides safer illumination of playing fields, reduces undesirable lighting of neighboring properties, and meets Town lighting bylaw requirements. Lighting of the field is automatically scheduled by the use of Musco's Control-Link computer system. The lighting project expanded the softball outfield's lit area to provide multifield use by Pop Warner, the local Youth Football league. In 2008, Elm Street playground was the oldest playground in our inventory and Recreation was awarded a Community Preservation Act (CPA) grant for a new fenced and handicap accessible toddler playground. The "Seideman vs. City of Newton" court decision in November 2008 caused the Town to put this grant in stasis, and the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) chose not to renew the grant when the 3-year grace period for project initiation expired. The funding was returned to the CPC in 2011. The Elm Street playground was dismantled in 2010.

### **8. 2A/27 – VETERANS MEMORIAL FIELD**

Veteran's Field is located at the intersection of 2A and Route 27. This Field consists of two irrigated Little League diamonds and a playground. This is a tournament quality lighted field that has been heavily utilized over the past five years. Insufficient parking is often an issue and parking along Route 27 and overflow parking into the Acton Woods Plaza parking lot across the intersection of Route 27 and Route 2A is sometimes needed. Acton-Boxborough Youth Baseball (ABYB) has invested time, materials, and funds in its upkeep, replacing fence caps, scoreboards, resodding turf and contributing to lighting system repairs. They have a 3-year renewable



Agreement with the Town that allows ABYB to display sponsorship signage on the outfield fence. An effort was made in 2008 to design and construct shaded dugouts funded by the Melanoma Foundation, but size limitations caused ABYB and the Town to conclude that they should be built instead at MacPherson field. Also in 2008, the Town developed a design for a new three-bay North Acton firehouse to be situated on the rise above the Veterans Field along Route 27, but the funding and construction of the project was put on hold due to a downturn in the economy.

### **9. SCHOOL STREET**

The School St. fields are located at the end of School St. off of Rte. 2 East. In 2006, an additional 10 acres was added to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Corrections System lease, for a total of 14 acres. The lease was due for renewal of a ten-year term from the Department of Corrections, in return for that agency's use of 25 acres of Acton's Wetherbee Conservation Land. Coupled with this expansion, a CPA grant for \$111,930 to build a twin baseball field was awarded to Recreation. Due to a variety of circumstances at the State level, the multi-year lease remains in negotiation with the State, and the Twin Ballfield project remains on hold, with extensions granted by the CPC. Since then, the field has remained a heavily used soccer field, although in the past five years little has been done to maintain the field, as the site has remained under an annual lease, renewable at the end of each calendar year while the multiyear lease negotiation has been in process. These fields are difficult to keep in playable condition because the soil is sandy with a gravel base and do not retain water. The proximity of the fields to Acton Water District wells (at 315 School Street and Lawsbrook Road) and an aeration tower restricts the Town or the sports leagues from irrigating the fields. The fields must be "rested" as much as field demand allows in order to retain a minimum amount of vegetation. The 10-acre parcel is "unplayable" for lacrosse users due to poor turf conditions. The Lion's Club Town Fair utilized this location in 2011, after using NARA Park playing fields in 2009 and 2010.

### **10. GOWARD PLAYGROUND**

Goward Playground is located behind the Acton Memorial Library at 486 Main St., in Acton Center. In the last five years, the wooden structures have undergone deterioration and many complaints about its condition have been voiced. This has traditionally been a very heavily used playground. However, some residents report that they have been going out of town to use other facilities because of the playground's condition. A tire swing was removed in 2007 due to rotting and unstable posts. The standalone wooden train, bouncing cart and playhouses are worn and need replacement. Recreation invested significant funds on Goward Playground maintenance in 2010 to replace failed components and bring playground up to ASTM F-1487 Playground Safety standards. A citizen's fundraising organization, "Friends of the Playground" has recently launched a fundraiser with a goal of \$100,000 to supplement the \$150,000 requested in capital funding to build a new playground.

### **11. GARDNER PLAYGROUND**

Gardner Field is located on Rte. 111 (Massachusetts Ave.) near Kinsley Rd. This field consists of a playground, basketball hoop, and field area. Recent maintenance updates to the playground have included complete replacement of worn swing components and replenishment of wood safety fiber surfacing surrounding two climbing play structures. Parking access to the

playground is limited to three designated paved spaces and increased parking has long been desired to again make use of the field area for organized sports activities.

## **12. NARA FIELDS**

NARA Park was opened in the spring of 2000. It is located at 25 Ledge Rock Way off Rte. 27 (Main St.). NARA Park is home to the NARA Youth and Mighty Mini Summer Camp and summer concert series. The park consists of a playground, NARA Pond and beach, a paved walking trail (approx. one mile loop), an irrigated softball field and three soccer fields, three picnic areas, a bathhouse pavilion, and an outdoor amphitheater stage. Three stations with dog waste bags are provided by the Recreation Dept.

The NARA fields are used quite extensively. On any given Saturday, the three soccer fields are broken down into multiple play areas in order to allow multiple teams to practice simultaneously. The Acton Boxborough Regional High School cross country program also uses the fields in the fall of each year. At the end of 2009, field vandalism from a vehicle severely damaged the playing fields and took the field offline for the 2010 spring season for reparation. Since then, a regular program of fertilization, aeration and reseedling has resulted in an improved playing surface. Frequent irrigation system repair is required.

## **13. T.J. O'GRADY MEMORIAL SKATE PARK**

This facility is for skateboarding and inline skating and was opened in the fall of 2005. The park is free and is open to the general public during daylight hours. The Skate Park is located at 66 Hayward Road, adjacent to the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School (ABRHS).

On November 20, 1998, a fourteen-year-old boy named T.J. O'Grady was struck and killed by an automobile while skateboarding down a residential road in Boxborough. Soon after this tragic accident, T.J.'s mother, Lori O'Grady, along with many of T.J.'s friends and their families, formed the T.J. O'Grady Memorial Skate Park Committee. The goal of this non-profit organization was to construct a safe place for children and adults to skateboard and inline skate.

Due to the lack of local facilities in Acton and Boxborough, those who enjoy skating had no choice other than to skate in streets and parking lots. Such a setup would put skaters and motorists in dangerous situations, and create both an annoyance and a liability for local businesses. A designated skating area would offer a responsible alternative, and, for this reason, the committee gained instant support from many organizations across town.

The Committee raised \$78,500 from private and business donations in addition to the \$80,000 that the Town of Acton approved in April, 2001. The town moved to accept the conveyance of 1.15 acres of land from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for \$2,500 to be used for the Skate Park. The land was accepted after the Annual Town meeting in 2003. In a series of several CPA grants (under "recreation"), the Town came up with the additional funding necessary to complete construction, totaling \$285,000. Following the Town's acquisition of the property from the Commonwealth, over a period of years, the property topography, site engineering and design was completed as a donation from the engineering company of Stamski and McNary. The lot was cleared and rough-graded thanks to the donation of services by Ace Brothers and Onyx Transportation and paving was donated by Lazaro Paving. Additional generous donations from many contributors made the construction of the park possible.

The grand opening of the T.J. O'Grady Memorial Skate Park took place in June of 2006. The Recreation Department holds an annual concert with the support of Danny's Place Youth Services, consisting of live bands and skating demonstrations. This has been a free event because of the generosity of local businesses and is open to the public. A valuable addition to the Town of Acton, the Skate Park builds community by providing a shared recreational opportunity for all ages.

#### **14. ROBBINS MILL RECREATION AREA**

In April 2011, the Robbins Mill Recreation Area was accepted as a gift to the Town of Acton from the Robbins Mill Estates Subdivision. It consists of a playground, picnic shelter, water fountain, basketball court, small soccer field and 40-space parking lot that were provided by the developer, Pulte Homes. The Recreation Dept. had the condition of the field assessed by a landscape contractor over the summer and had it fertilized and seeded in the fall, to improve the playing surface, which had not developed adequate turf coverage. The playground was inspected by the Recreation Dept. for routine maintenance and a bolt for the multi-pondo teeter-totter was replaced. Note that the playground equipment for the subdivision was purchased in 2006 and was stored onsite at the Recreation Area parcel but was not installed until Pulte Homes began the construction of the Recreation Area in 2010 when home purchases in the subdivision neared 90%, a delay attributed to an economic downturn in 2008.

#### **5D2. MISCELLANEOUS RECREATIONAL AND PUBLIC AREAS**

##### **A. MORRISON PROPERTY:**

Located at 116 Concord Road in East Acton, the 32-acre Morrison Farm property lies between two Town-owned properties, the Woodlawn Cemetery and Ice House Pond. The front portion (about 17 acres) on Concord Road is open field with a farmhouse, garage, barn, and three out-buildings, and the rear portion (about 15 acres) is wooded. The Farm property in its entirety can be compartmentalized into four general areas: pine woodlands, open hayfield, lower meadow, and farm buildings and paddocks.

An historic inventory prepared in 2005 by Arthur Krimm of the Massachusetts Historical Commission determined that both the Morrison Farm and the Ice House Pond properties were eligible for placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

In the spring of 1997, Town Meeting voted to acquire the property for \$1.3MM. The warrant article was supported for three overriding reasons: (1) use for passive recreation and conservation; (2) potential use for active recreation; and (3) elimination of a potential for residential development. The Morrison Farm was purchased with a life estate to the resident, Betty Morrison, and in 2003 when Mrs. Morrison permanently vacated the property, it then came under the control of the Town.

The Board of Selectmen appointed an advisory committee in 2004 composed of members representing various interests concerning the recommended reuse of the property. The goal of the

Morrison Farm Reuse Committee was to develop a reuse plan that would accommodate citizens' desires for active and passive recreation while taking into account the land's value in terms of conservation and rural character. This committee held meetings open to the public welcoming proposals from special interest groups and town residents, including an open forum at Town Hall.

Following upwards of 18 months of meetings, the Committee reached consensus on several fundamental goals. Most importantly, the agricultural heritage of the property should be preserved. Since 1669, the fields have remained in the same general condition. It is also important for the familiar rural views from Concord Road to be preserved, and for the Morrison Farm Property to be integrated into the surrounding cultural context through incorporation of nearby existing properties into the proposed Farm design. Lastly, a portion of the property should be set aside for recreational use in accordance with the original Town Meeting vote in 1997.

Several augmentations of existing trails have been proposed, along with an observation platform and canoe launch on the pond, which would enrich both the fitness and wildlife-viewing aspects of the property. The 19<sup>th</sup>-century Nashoba Brook Bridge should be reconstructed, which would provide access to the Farm property from potential alternate parking locations along Great Road. Integrating the proposed East Acton Village Green, the future Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Woodlawn Cemetery, the historic Captain Robbins' site, and the Nashoba Brook ecosystem into the design planning of the Morrison Farm would enhance the region through the creation of a community complex. A multi-purpose recreation field is included in the recommendation goals, but the committee strongly suggests that the Farm remain a last resort for active recreation development. A Community Organic Farm was established on the southwestern portion of the property, to great success. There are currently 38 organic garden plots.

Such recommendations for this property aim to optimize land use in a historically and environmentally sensitive manner. Through thoughtful management of our natural resources, the splendor of this valuable town resource can be appreciated well into the future.

*[Dean Charter to provide writeup for following:]*

## **B. MEETING HOUSE HILL**

## **C. ACTON COMMON**

## **D. WEST ACTON**

**Farmers Market**

**Windsor Bldg**

**Edwards Square**

**E. NORTH ACTON  
NARA PARK**

**F. SOUTH ACTON  
Senior Center**

**5E. SCHOOL DEPARTMENT LAND**

*[D.J. head providing writeup for following:]*

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District owns 66.6 acres of land, and the Acton School District controls (the land is under town ownership) 121.77 acres of land. Although there are buildings on almost all of these properties, the school campuses and grounds provide valuable open space.

One parcel of School Department land is not associated with an actual school building and holds value as open space. This parcel is located on Arlington Street, north of Route 2, and is 24.92 acres in size (Town Atlas E-3, Parcel 8). This land was acquired in 1962 as a potential school site, although the soils were unsuitable for construction.

**SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS**

Luther Conant School	80 Taylor Road
Paul P. Gates School	75 Spruce Street
C.T. Douglas School	21 Elm Street
Merriam School	11 Charter Road
McCarthy-Towne School	11 Charter Road

**LOCATIONS**

**SCHOOL PLAYING FIELDS**

R.J. Grey Junior High School	16 Charter Road
Acton-Boxboro Regional H.S.	36 Charter Road

**LOCATIONS**

**Intermunicipal Agreements**

Intermunicipal Agreements between the Town of Acton and the Acton Boxborough Regional School District have created expanded recreational opportunities at school facilities for all of the Acton community, beyond their routine school usage. These agreements were forged as a key piece of several funding initiatives for active recreation projects through Community Preservation Act (CPA). The projects funded via this method to date include:

- 2005 High School Synthetic Turf Football Field – Leary Field, ABRHS
- 2006 Douglas School Basketball Courts – Douglas School
- 2007 High School Baseball and Tennis Court Sports Lighting, ABRHS
- 2012 (Proposed) Lower Fields Project (sports lighting, parking, skating bowl), ABRHS and T.J. O’Grady Skate Park

## **5. F. WATER BASED RECREATION**

This section provides a review of the water-based recreation areas in Acton.

### **NARA PARK**

NARA Park Beach provides the only public swimming area in town and serves over 600 seasonal members, in addition to selling over 4,500 daily passes each season. Fishing and boating are enjoyed by patrons.

### **GREAT HILL RECREATION AREA SKATING POND**

The pond is a 3/4 acre impoundment created by excavating an old, silted-up farm pond that was reverting into a red maple swamp. Completed in 1986, the pond is used for skating, fishing and wildlife viewing.

### **MILL POND RECREATION AREA**

This half-acre site is located between Main Street and the Fort Pond Brook Mill Pond, above the 1848 stone dam near the site of Faulkner Mills. The site has a half-acre of grass, and is open to the water for fishing and related activities. This area's use is somewhat limited by lack of on-site parking. Eventual completion of the ARRT near this site will improve access. This location also houses a pumping facility for Acton's wastewater treatment system.

### **ROBBINS MILL POND**

This is a man-made impoundment in the Nashoba Brook Conservation Area. The pond, approximately three acres in size, is the site of mill foundations and an earth fill dam that dates back to pre-Colonial times. In 1990, the town, using funds for materials donated by the Acton Conservation Trust, rebuilt the dam extensively. The restored impoundment is suitable for fishing, canoeing, and wildlife study. Additional reconstruction was undertaken in 1995, utilizing an eight-man crew from the Northeastern Correctional Facility in Concord.

### **GRASSY POND**

The boardwalks and trails leading to Grassy Pond, in the Grassy Pond Conservation Area, provide access into the pond for fishing, canoeing and wildlife study. This large pond covers about 20 acres.

### **ARBORETUM POND**

A 4,000 square foot pond was excavated at the Arboretum in 1991. This small pond provides an open water habitat for birds and other wildlife that reside in, or migrate through, the Arboretum.

### **ARBORETUM BOG BOARDWALK**

There is a 100 yard long boardwalk across the quaking bog located at the Arboretum. This boardwalk, which includes an observation bench, allows close study of bog plants and related wildlife. Many elementary classes study the bog and its inhabitants each year during outings hosted by the Natural Resources Department.

### **WILL'S HOLE BOG BOARDWALK**

The boardwalk into Will's Hole, a kettle hole pond and associated quaking bog, provides safe access to the pond for wildlife and plant observation.

#### ICE HOUSE POND

This is a four-acre impoundment of Nashoba Brook, located on town-owned land at the intersection of Concord Road and Great Road. Since management activities (including yearly draining) related to ice harvesting stopped in the 1950s, the pond was very rapidly filling with floating and emergent vegetation that cut into the recreational potential of the site. In 1995 the pond was de-watered and dredged to restore its value as a boating and fishing area. Because of the proximity of the parking area to the water's edge, this site has the potential for handicapped access for water recreation.

#### SANDY POND

In 1988, a contractor dredged a two-acre pond located near Sandy Drive (off of School Street) that is located on town conservation land. This impoundment is publicly accessible for fishing and nature study.